

**FOI: 22911041 Robert Milligan Statue**

Can you tell me who approved the removal of the statue?

What was the process as there was no public consultation?

Where is it now?

Will other things associated with him have their names changed?

Has the council considered the wider impact for example books in libraries which some may consider offensive?

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Final approval for the removal of the statue was given by the Canal and River Trust on whose land it sat. This followed a partnership discussion at which the council was represented.

What was the process as there was no public consultation?

The following was provided as a public statement in response to media enquiries on this issue and addresses the question asked: The council worked closely with the Canal and River Trust as the landowners throughout this process and collectively we sought the guidance of the Museum of London and the Metropolitan Police too. Events in recent weeks have moved rapidly and following the removal of the statue of Edward Colston in Bristol by protestors on Sunday, it was clear that decisions about other statues needed to be taken more quickly than might typically be the case. As organisations that are embedded in our communities with core values that oppose racism and champion equality and inclusion, we felt that it was appropriate to move swiftly to agree a way forward that was sympathetic to the strength of feeling on this issue. We were also mindful of our responsibility to ensure that if the statue was going to be removed, it was done in a way that not only preserved it for future use in a museum or education setting, but also that avoided the safety of the public being put at risk in any way. We sought advice from planning officers, as did the Canal and River Trust, and collectively we were satisfied that the unique context of this decision and our ability to keep the statue in safe storage while avoiding its potential damage had it not been removed, meant prior planning consent was not required. The Trust has announced that it intends to carry out a community led consultation –to be chaired by Sir William Atkinson –to consider the future display arrangements for the statue as well as the question of what the now vacant plinth at West India Quay will be used for.

Where is it now?

Following its removal, the statue was being temporarily stored at a council storage facility which cannot be named for security reasons and was collected by the canal River Trust shortly afterwards and taken to a longer term place of storage.

Will other things associated with him have their names changed?

The mayor has announced a review into monuments, buildings, streets and other assets that take their name from periods in history associated with slavery or oppression. The initial work of that review is underway and decisions will be taken in due course. Has the council considered the wider impact for example books in libraries which some may consider offensive? The question of books in libraries is not one which requires consideration in the context of this discussion about the representation of historic figures in public places

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